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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 004115

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PBTS](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [MARR](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: NINEWA: KURDS AND ARABS A LONG WAY FROM DIALOGUE
AS ARTICLE 140 DEADLINE LOOMS, BUT BOTH SIDES RECOGNIZE
RISKS OF CONFRONTATION

REF: BAGHDAD 4107

Classified By: Ninewa PRT Leader Jason Hyland: 1.4 (B) and (D).

This is a Ninewa Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) message.

[¶1.](#) (C/REL ACGU) Summary: In a series of meetings on Article 140 with many influential Ninewa political figures on December 10-11, Special Advisor David Pearce heard unanimous support for continued USG engagement on the issue but agreement on little else. While Kurds favored implementation of what they see as a constitutional process, Arabs called for patience to establish local security and balance out provincial representation. In each meeting, Pearce stressed that the USG supports a "fair, transparent, agreed process" in which each side in the negotiations may walk away with a non-optimal solution. He urged the sides to tone down their rhetoric and work together before the end of the year to agree at least on a process to announce the inevitable delay of the constitutionally stipulated referendum by the end of [¶2007](#). Pearce said the danger of ignoring the December 31 deadline and the need to resolve the status of disputed territories is that the insurgency continues to gain strength from these unresolved territorial questions. He said new UN Special Representative for Iraq Staffan de Mistura could be a useful counterpart for all sides. End Summary.

[¶2.](#) (C/REL ACGU) Ninewa Vice Governor and Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) head Khasro Goran said his party foresees the largely Kurdish and Yezidi Sinjar District as the most contentious disputed territory in the province, largely because any decision on the area would either leave an island of Kurds in Sinjar or create an island of Sunni Arabs around Rabia'a. He said it would be difficult to split the city of Mosul, and expected it would remain the unified capital of any future Ninewa Province. He stressed that the KDP wants to see conclusion of the Article 140 process before provincial elections so that "we would know how and where to vote." His four-part suggestion for USG engagement on Article 140 included USG recognition that the process will not result in war, clarification of USG intentions, USG effort to meet all factions, and heavy USG engagement in western Ninewa.

[¶3.](#) (C/REL ACGU) Sarbast Amur Terwaneshi, the Sinjar KDP leader) who wields enormous clout in this sensitive region - said about two-thirds of the 317,000 Sinjar residents are Kurds who supported the vote on the Iraqi constitution and who would support Sinjar joining the Kurdistan Regional Government. He said the Kurds in Sinjar would not try to take any land by force from the Arab residents. Sarbast said

the KDP has no interest in the predominantly Arab sub-districts of Buleij or Rabia'a joining the KRG.

¶4. (C/REL ACGU) Dr. Mohammad Shakir, the head of the Ninewa chapter of the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP) and IIP politburo member, said provincial elections, enforcement of local security and a census must happen before the Article 140 process can be implemented. He said he is willing to engage in the political process, which his party's largely Sunni Arab constituents boycotted in 2005, and cited recent attacks on the party's members as evidence of the continued opposition to this engagement among some Sunni Arabs in the province. Shakir said the Kurds undermine their own security by trying to annex as much land as possible, sometimes by force. He argued that the Kurds should participate in "a country of institutions, of a constitution," in which the USG or the United Nations plays a leading role in organizing transparent elections. Shakir said he meets regularly with Goran to discuss security and Article 140 issues.

¶5. (C/REL ACGU) Abdullah Al Yawr, an influential sheikh who leads one branch of the Shammar tribe from his home in Rabia'a, said his tribe has no problem with the Kurds in general but that the KDP is fomenting instability in Ninewa. He complained that the KDP's control of Provincial Governor Duraid Kashmoula, the Provincial Council and the provincial election commission guarantees that non-Kurds will be unable to challenge the Kurds in any vote on disputed territories. Despite the lack of political avenues to express Arab desires, Abdullah said he would refuse to allow "even a meter" of Ninewa land to join the Kurds. Minor sheikhs associated with Abdullah presented specific complaints of Iraqi Army harassment and intimidation that they blamed on Kurdish Peshmerga and Assayish influence within the army.

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Abdullah said he plans to meet Goran later in December to discuss Arab-Kurdish relations.

¶6. (C/REL ACGU) Governor Kashmoula said he maintains good relations with everyone in Ninewa, but disparaged the popular strength of many Sunni Arab leaders, including Shaker and Abdullah. He said the IIP lacks strong political support, with the majority of Sunni Arabs in Mosul either actively supporting the insurgency or observing the political wrangling over Article 140 without getting involved (Note: in the last election held, December 2005 for the Council of Representatives, the IIP won over 40% of the vote in Ninewa). The governor said Abdullah and the Shammar tribe fear Article 140 will take away some of their land but lack widespread popular support.

¶7. (C/REL ACGU) Tel Keif Mayor Basem Belo, a politburo member of the Assyrian Democratic Party (Christian), complained that his constituency is weak and seeks to maintain the integrity of an Iraq that guards minority rights. However, he complained that neither the Kurds nor the Iraqi national government is doing enough to guarantee Christian economic prosperity in the rush to grab as much land as possible before implementation of the Article 140 process. Belo said the Christians in his area would prefer to use the Article 125 process to create a Christian homeland in the Ninewa Plain region. He also said other Christians, in the Bartallah area east of Mosul, are more favorable than he toward joining the KRG.

¶8. (C/REL ACGU) Comment: Kurds and Arabs in Ninewa do not have a coherent structure in place to discuss security and coordination in the province, much less the wider issues of disputed territories or implementation of the Article 140 process. We will continue to follow up with each of the major political players to reinforce Pearce's comments on the need for dialogue, compromise and an agreed process for announcing what the next steps will be after December 31. End Comment.
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